

BICYCLE MOBILE HAMS OF AMERICA

Apr/May/Jun 1995

UPCOMING EVENTS

BMHA Plans E-Mail Directory for Members

John Einberger, NOMSA, is compiling a directory of members' E-mail addresses. If you have access to Internet send your E-mail address to John at nomsa@aol.com. Otherwise mail it to him: John Einberger, 425 Oakwood Pl, Boulder CO 80304. Or you can write it on your dues card and send it in (Box 4009, etc.) with your dues check. (Note that the dues card now has a space for your E-mail address.) For more news see our new E-Mail column elsewhere in this issue.

Need Clips

If you or other bike-hams are written up in local newspapers or club newsletters, send me a clip or a Xerox. It could give us more fodder and ideas for promoting BMHA, and of course could lead to interesting pieces for this newsletter.

Writers Wanted!

We always need manuscripts on these subjects:

Antennas. Our readers have shown more interest in this department than any other. Antenna homebrewers, please notice.

Travel and Adventure. Always looking for stories about long (or short) bike trips. Especially, instances where ham radio took care of much-needed emergency communication; instances where local hams offered overnight accommodations or helped you out of a tight spot; cycling trips in foreign countries. About a third of the article should deal with how (and what) ham radio was used on the trip.

Getting Started in Bicycle-Mobiling. We get numerous requests for general and specific information for newly-licensed hams. They want to know how to attach antenna and/or radio to the bike, etc, etc. In other words, all the problems you had to deal with when you first went bicycle-mobile.

>> If you'd like to write on any of these topics, send me a brief outline. Or just sit down and bat it out and send in the completed article. Send it on a disc and our editorial staff will love you!

—Harley Alley, NOAA, Editor



ADVENTURE CYCLING

Dayton HamVention – April 28-30

Here's the schedule for BMHA's sixth annual forum.

DATE: Sunday April 30

TIME: 0830 - 1100

ROOM: 2

The first hour will be an informal session for BMHA'ers. This is our chance to meet and share with other members any and all information. Members are welcome to present informally any topic that might be of interest to other BMHA'ers. Our moderators will be there to direct the discussion. This is also a time to meet the panelists.

The remaining time (from 9:30 to 11) will be devoted to presentations by the Forum panelists.

FORUM MODERATORS:

Mike Nickolaus, NF0N and Bob Pulhui, KE8ZJ

FORUM PANELISTS:

Russ Dwarshuis, KB8U -- "Internet Happenings for Bikies"

Chris Charron, WB0RSW — "Lighting, Visibility, and

Power Distribution on a Budget*

Jim Kortge, NU8N -- "2-Band Bike-Mobile Amplifier"

2 METER CONTACT: We'll continue to use 146.575 simplex as BMHA's own secret frequency for communicating at the Hara Arena and for the Lunch Bunch. Put that frequency in your HT's memory and monitor or call at the top of each hour -- use it for any and all contacts during the entire weekend.

LUNCH BUNCH: Let's meet again on Saturday for lunch at 11:30 at Food Tent 4. Look in your HamVention Guide for the exact location. It's outdoors in the northeast part of the complex.

BMHA's Fourth Annual Bike Tour

BMHA will again sponsor a bike tour in conjunction with the Dayton HamVention. The fourth annual event will begin on Saturday, April 29 at 1:30 pm in the Tipp City Park.. Hosts for the event are Jim Gumbert, NC8Y, and Ken Noffsinger, AE8L.

This year's ride will be of 30 to 90 minutes duration,
(cont. on page 2)

(continued from page 1)

depending on participant's preferences. The tour will be in and around Tipp City, which is about 10 miles north of the HamVention. *You must be 18 or older to participate in the tour.* You should plan to start promptly at 1:30 pm. Riders are advised that late April weather in Ohio can vary from a cold rain to sunny skies with temperatures in the 80's.

A picnic at the park will follow the ride. Ride participants who wish to take part in the picnic may choose to order a meal from a local area restaurant. Persons ordering meals can expect to have them delivered to the park shortly before the ride is completed. A shelter will be available for eating and socializing in case of inclement weather.

BMHAers who would like to attend the picnic but not take part in the ride are also welcome. There are a number of trees in the park for those who may want to erect temporary antennas to operate portable, as well as areas where impromptu equipment demonstrations may be conducted during the ride and picnic.

Maps are available illustrating how to get from the HamVention to the Tipp City Park. Send an SASE to the address below by April 15 to receive a map, or pick one up at the BMHA Lunch Bunch meeting at the HamVention, Saturday April 29, beginning at 11:30 am.

Talk-in to the Tipp City Park prior to the beginning of the 1:30 ride will be on the Miami County Amateur Radio Club repeater, 145.23 (-600). Secondary communications, including intra-group communications during the ride, will be on 146.575 simplex -- the regular BMHA "secret" frequency.

Map requests should be sent to:

Ken R. Noffsinger, AE8I
43 Kent Road
Tipp City, OH 45371

Continued on UPGRADE 12, PPG 2 27 05

May 27 -- BMHA's Western States Roundup

The program for our second annual Western States Roundup has been finalized by Ken Wahrenbrock, KF6NC, Roundup Coordinator. The Roundup, slated for the Saturday of the Memorial Day Weekend, is part of the Great Western Bicycle Rally. The GWBR annually draws 2,000 cyclists to Paso Robles, CA. for a weekend packed with cycling-related activities.

Over the four-day weekend the GWBR program includes 90 different bicycle rides, from an easy 7-miler to a tough 100-miler in the mountains. Centered at the Fairgrounds (plenty of RV and camping space), the weekend program includes bike clinics, a film festival, mass cookout, and a special wine and cheese tasting party.

Saturday afternoon from 3:00 to 5:00 we will have our BMHA Roundup, where you'll have a chance to chat with other BMHAers and show how you use radio on your bike. Non-hams in particular are invited, and will receive special handouts, in the hope that they will learn the usefulness of ham radio to the bike rider. If you'd like to help during

the program contact Ken Wahrenbrock, KF6NC, 9609 Cheddar St. Downey, CA 90242

Communication on 2 meters: We'll monitor the local repeater 146.880 from Friday noon on -- BMHA'ers can use that for talk-in and for setting up eyeballs.

Housing in motels and hotels will be difficult unless you make reservations very early. Registration for the weekend is \$12 per person, \$25 per family. For registration forms write to: GWBR, P.O. Box 4389, Culver City CA 90231.

June 16-19 -- GEAR, Amherst, MA

At the Great Eastern Rally, BMHA will present a demonstration of equipment and techniques for bicycle-mobile operation. Tailored to an audience of non-ham cyclists, the program will stress the advantages of using amateur radio for communication on group rides and in emergency situations. Program chair John Allen, AA1EP, has recruited several BMHAers to help with this presentation.

July 5-9 -- LAB National Rally, Asheville, NC

John McClun, N3REY, will present a program similar to the above, again with special introductory demonstrations for the non-ham cyclist. BMHA members who plan on being at the National Rally are asked to contact John ASAP. He'd like you to bring your ham gear and help demonstrate bicycle-mobile equipment and techniques. **Contact:** John McClun, N3REY, 5399 Briar Oak Court, Ellicott City MD 21043

Oct 20-22 -- Pacificon to Host a BMHA Forum

Neil Fullagar, KB6NCX, will present a program/demonstration of bicycle-mobile VHF and HF equipment and operating techniques at the Pacificon. The west coast's largest gathering of hams, the Pacificon is situated at Concord, CA., in the San Francisco area. If you'd like to volunteer, comment, or have suggestions for the program, contact Neil Fullagar, 401 Maitland, Alameda CA 94502. Internet: nfullagar@ccgate.apl.com. Watch for details in the next newsletter.

COMMENTS

....My husband Garry, K6BIK, and I, KD6WES, use our radios on all our bike tours. I was happy to get my license after I had had a nasty flat tire and he was miles ahead. The radios and Mr. Tuffy make me a happy and secure cyclist! We plan to bike from Tahoe to Nova Scotia this summer!

---Barbara Anderson, KD6WES, Carmelien Bay, CA

....I'm planning a 7,000-mile solo self-contained recumbent trip across the US and Europe to Bethlehem, Israel this June to December. Please send info about BMHA and how ham radio could help me on this trip.

---Jim Hendrickson, Bellingham, WA

(More Comments on page 4)

ANTENNAS

This is to remind you of Ken Wahrenbrock's offer to provide detailed instructions for how to make his famous MOB Stainless "J" antenna. This antenna was featured in the October '92 BMHA NewsLetter, and is used by over 40 members of the MOB (Mobiles On Bikes), the cycling wing of the Downey CA ARC. Ken teaches classes in antenna construction in his garage-classroom-workshop.

Ken writes that he regularly uses this antenna to talk from his bike to his base station when he's 100 miles away, with intervening mountains -- and that's with an ICOM 2AT using only 1.5 watts.

You must specify whether you want plans for 144, 220, or 440 MHz -- they're \$1 each, to cover the cost of printing and mailing. Write to Ken Wahrenbrock, KF6NC, 9609 Cheddar St, Downey CA 90242



VEs Pose for Annual Picture. Michael Pilon, VE3BUP, a well-known BMHAer in Ottawa, sends us a very interesting article from the Ottawa Sun. Mike gets his bike-mobile friends together each year for a group picture, standing by their bikes and decked out in their usual bicycle commuting gear. (You remember Mike's article titled "Commuting -- VE's Daily Route Perfect" in the July '94 BMHA NewsLetter.)

When the Sun editors heard about this photo event they knew it would make a good piece for the paper, so they sent a writer/photog team to cover it. Incidentally, the writer they sent was perfect for the job; she's a real bikie -- had already cycled 120 km that morning!

The story starts with the banner headline **CYCLING ON AIR** and runs through the usual jokes that appeal to nonhams, but then settles down to a very well-written description of our hobby, along with two large pictures.

Mike doesn't need to point out that this is an excellent way to gain publicity for your local hams who commute by bicycle. Many cities, and newspapers, are engaged in a campaign to curb air pollution by getting commuters out of their cars and into another mode of transportation -- and they'd jump on this kind of story. And you and cycling and hamming would get some nice publicity. All you have to do is get the gang together and phone the paper.

HINTS & KINKS

Antenna Mount for Car Works Fine on Bike Hartley,

....I should blame you if I feel tired. The weekend of October 15-16, I served as Bike Radio Sag for the 28th annual Hilly Hundred. You remember that ride, the two hilliest fifty mile rides available in the Bloomington, Indiana area. You better remember it, you were the founder of the ride -- almost thirty years ago! Two-meters works great to summon four-wheel help when needed. Besides that, it allows the sag drivers to avoid adding to the congestion of the 5,000-plus bikes along the sections of road where we have bikes going both directions at the same time. Anyway, I managed to ride seventy miles on a hilly fifty-mile course, and I'm into bonk!

Bike Hams are always looking for new and better antenna mounts. Here is a quick temporary one: get the ANLI mobile window-mount, which is designed to slip over a car's side window for mobile use. There is an attached ten feet of miniature coax, which is more than enough for bicycle use. I initially hot-glued the mount to the rear rack, thinking a sharp blow would break the glue joint, thus allowing relatively easy removal of it. Not one of my better ideas. The joint does break with a sharp blow, but do you realize how many sharp blows an object mounted to a bike receives in just a short fifty miles? So for the Hilly Hundred ride I reverted to plan two: nylon straps (Tywraps).

If maximum range is important, the window mount bracket can be attached to your helmet or rump, depending upon which is higher in your normal riding position. This mount used with the HT rubber duck antenna is not equal to a full-sized J-Pole but it is great for temporary use. Take a roll of strapping tape for mounting your HT to the Aero bars and you are ready.

One last Hilly Hundred story. As I, completely bushed, finished the ride I was attacked by a more-than-middle-aged woman. She had spotted my volunteer shirt, saw the radio, and figured that I could help her. Her 88-year-old father was somewhere on the ride, he was to meet her there at 4:00 PM and it was now 3:59 PM, where was he? Why did I not go back on the route looking for him, right now?! She did not buy my story of the ride organizers using a flock of trained buzzards to monitor for just the possibility she feared the most. So I retreated as fast as possible to the safety of the headquarters building. There exiting the building was a dapper, well-dressed, freshly-showered gentleman of more than a few winters. We exchanged pleasantries about the nice ride and weather, and I then asked how old could he be. He smiled and reported proudly, "I'm 88". I told him his daughter was near to a full blown fit waiting for him, but if he wanted to join me for a coke, we could both watch her explode.

Any 88-year-old that wants to go on fifty-mile rides in hilly southern Indiana should be allowed to do so. Anyway, expiring while biking is a lot easier to explain to the great-grandkids than explaining that grandpa was shot by a jealous husband.

73, and keep up the good work.

—Dave Gerbig, WB9MZZ

3504 S. Tremont Way
Bloomington, Indiana 47401

E-MAIL

New E-Mail List for Bicycle Mobile Hams

Due to popular demand, a new mailing list has been created. This list caters exclusively to bicycle mobile hams (unlike the bikecurrent list, that was featured in the previous column), and is now the 'official' e-mail list of the BMHA. You do not have to be a BMHA member to join the mailing list. No salesmen will call...:-)

Subscription and other information can be obtained by sending a two line message to majordomo@cyclimg.org. The two lines should be: info bikeham
end

If you think your message would be of interest exclusively to hams, use the bikeham@cyclimg.org address. If your message could be of interest to other cyclists with an interest in bicycle electronics, send it to: bikecurrent@cyclimg.org (or just send it to both lists!)

World Wide Web Pages

A fun way to cruise the Internet is with a web page reader, such as Mosaic. Many of the files are also available via anonymous ftp. One WWW page of interest to bicyclist-hams is primarily about bicycle lights, but does feature notes on batteries, battery chargers (including generators and solar cells) and high-efficiency voltage regulators especially for bicycles. The page can be accessed by going to:

<http://www.bath.ac.uk/~bspahh/bikelights/lights.html>

Everything you always wanted to know about Winnebiko and BEHEMOTH (the ham radio- and computer-equipped recumbent bicycles built by BMHA member Steve Roberts, N4RVE) can be found on the web page <http://microship.ucsd.edu/> His latest project is the Microship; details about its development and current state can be found on this source.

Finally, a WWW page of general interest to bicyclists is: <http://cyclimg.org>. There's a wealth of information pertaining to all aspects of bicycling here, so check it out.

Flash! Just got this message from John Einberger, NOMSA, of Boulder, Colorado:

E-Mail Directory and On-Line Forum Planned for BMHA

I have been asked to compile an E-Mail Directory of BMHA members -- this to be issued annually, as is the BMHA Packet Directory. Please send your e-mail address(es) to me on Internet at n0msa@aol.com. Or mail it to me, John Einberger, 425 Oakwood Place, Boulder CO 80304.

In a recent discussion with several BMHA members the subject of starting a forum devoted to BMHA with one of the on-line services (CompuServe, American Online, etc.) came up. The concept would be to initiate an on-line forum with the intent of providing a place for BMHA members to exchange ideas on all manner of subjects relating to operating your rig while bicycle mobile. It didn't take long for us to

realize, however, that the single most important piece of information lacking was the interest level of the membership.

To be concise, we need to know if you would participate in an on-line BMHA Forum. Please respond (yea, nay, or don't care) along with any other suggestions you may have on this idea during our twice-a-month net on 20 meters, or via packet to Hartley Alley (NA0A @ KORZ.#NECO.CO) or, if you have INTERNET access, to John Einberger n0msa@aol.com. From your responses we will gauge the interest level and let you know in a future newsletter.
---John Einberger, n0msa

Thanks, John! In the next issue I'll review a BBS that caters to bicycle mobile hams. If you can't wait until then, try dialing 405-447-6712 with your modem. As always, if you have any questions feel free to e-mail me at rjd@merit.edu.

---Russell Dwarshuis, KB8U

427 Barber Ave

Ann Arbor, MI 48103-2721

MORE COMMENTS

....Today, Feb 19, is sunny and warm ("warm" being 42) and it happens to coincide with the ARRL DX CW contest. I rode 32 miles and worked a new DXCC country!

[Russ works CW from the bike while underway! Ed.]

---Russell Dwarshuis, KB8U, Ann Arbor, MI

....Read of your organization in *Adventure Cycling*. Immediately thought this was the greatest idea since sliced bread! My husband and I do quite a bit of touring and a 2-meter ham radio could solve several nagging problems -- communication between us as my husband speeds away and, of course, emergency contacts. Enclosed find check for membership. We plan to take the license exam next month.

---Anita Lukes, Indianapolis IN

....I read about BMHA in CQ. Please send more info. I ride a LIGHTNING recumbent, and am struggling with finding a good antenna/rig configuration for 2m, hopefully progressing to the HF bands by the end of summer. Only time, money, and perseverance will tell!

---Ron Blake, N0RTX, Norwood, MA

....My hobby and my love is my bicycling. I never wanted to take the telephone with me on my bike rides, but I'm 60 years old now, and it's like wearing a helmet -- you gotta, you gotta. Enclosed find a money order for membership. With any luck I'll be talking to you on ham radio some day soon.

---Lewis "Jack" Anderson, Troy, MI

....I have an MFJ and a Hamstick on my mountain bike. Have enjoyed working 20 meters with more success than I ever could have imagined.

---Kermit Grenz, WA0SWD, Andover, MN

....I was reading old issues of QST in the library and came across a short paragraph on BMHA. I am a bike commuter and now that I have recovered from graduate school, want to become a more active ham. Merging biking and ham radio seems like a natural. Please send more information about BMHA.

---David S Murphy, PhD, CPA, N7LKB, Stillwater, OK

NEW MEMBERS

We're pleased to add these names to our Membership List:

Robert Bachman, KG8HQ, 5775 N Clinton Tr, Charlotte MI 48813
Don Branflick, KB2SQT, 6 Jane Lane, High Bridge NJ 08829
Terrance Brodie, KB9IUW, 127 Park St, Algonquin IL 60102
M E Burroughs, KC7CWP, 1712 N Nye, Toledo OR 97391
Wm H Burroughs, N7LVK, 1712 N Nye, Toledo OR 97391
Ray Butler, WA4KEJ, 5952 Liskoy Dr, Mobile AL 36608
Norbert Carr, POB 8424, New Haven CT 06530-0424

Gene Challengren, KA6NEG, 2201 Shadow Creek Ct, Southlake TX 76092
Lynn Dick, 3244 West 38 Ave, Vancouver BC, Canada V6N 2X6
Jim Hendrickson, 3978 Roma Court, Bellingham WA 98226
Marva Jonjak, N9ZVF, Route 1 Box 1372, Spooner WI 54801
William F Kyle, 231 Seaboard Ave, Hampton VA 23664

Anita L. Lukas, 4539 N. Pennsylvania St, Indianapolis IN 46205
B J Martin, 3529 Sea Ridge Rd, Oceanside CA 92054
John Morris, NOHQX, 1524 Lyon St, Hannibal MO 63401
Chuck Sather, 507 Golf Links Dr, Bridgewater NJ 08807
Larry Varney, KM4ZH, 240 Trapp-Murnan Rd, Cold Spring KY 41076

*With traditional ham friendliness, make contact
with these new members, welcome them to BMHA,
and help them with any problems they might have.*

ABOUT BMHA

For the information of our first-time readers

Bicycle Mobile Hams of America got its start when a "Stray" in the June '89 QST magazine asked to "get in touch with hams who operate their radios while bicycle-mobile, or while in any other human-powered conveyance", signed by Hartley Alley, NA0A. Twenty five hams responded, filled out questionnaires, and received a summary of the collected data.

In April of '90 we had our first BMHA Forum at the Dayton HamVention. We played to a packed house, overflowed the room, and added 54 names to our mailing list. Our four subsequent forums have drawn increasingly larger audiences, and now BMHA is established as a "regular" at this world-renowned event.

This is the nineteenth issue of our quarterly newsletter, which has become the clearing house for the exchange of info and ideas for the hams who go on the air from their bicycles. Since the last issue of this newsletter we have added 17 new members. The total membership now stands at 403, with members in 42 states, and six countries.

BMHA membership puts you in touch with a friendly and helpful group of bike-riding hams. You'll make contacts through our membership directory, packet and E-mail address lists, bi-weekly net on 20 meters, annual meeting and Forum at the Dayton HamVention and other regional meetings, and of course through the BMHA Newsletter, which has articles on bike trips, antennas, other gear, operating tips, etc. Membership application blank on the next to last page.

BMHA NEWSLETTER

EDITOR: Hartley Alley, NA0A
ASSOCIATE EDITOR: Skip LaFetra, AA6WK
ASSISTANT EDITOR: Bil Paul, KD6JUI

BOARD OF ADVISORS:
Russell Dwarshuis, KB8U Len Koppl, KD0RC
Mike Nickolaus, NF0N Bob Pulhuj, KE8ZJ
Chairman and Founder: Hartley Alley, NA0A

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We welcome articles, suggestions, letters, announcements, photos, artwork — anything pertaining to bicycling while operating an amateur radio, or vice versa.

Submitted material will be edited for clarity and, if necessary, shortened to fit space constraints. Material should be submitted before Mar 1, June 1, Sept 1, or Dec 1 for inclusion in the ensuing issue.

BMHA NEWSLETTER is the quarterly publication of the Bicycle Mobile Hams of America — Jan, Apr, July, Oct.

TELEPHONE: 303-494-6559
BICYCLE MOBILE HAMS OF AMERICA (BMHA)
Box 4009, Boulder, CO 80306



NEW HAMS

Five Members Now Have Tickets!

They hit the books, sweated, and got nervous at the exam site — just as we all did. But they passed!and probably came away thinking it wasn't so tough after all.

Since the last issue these members have become licensed hams.

Congratulations!

Don Branflick, KB2SQT, High Bridge, NJ

Ned Hatton, KC7GDA, Glendale, AZ

Brian Vanderheyden, KB0PRY, St Louis, MO

Liz Welder, KB5DYF, Victoria, TX

Ray Wyatt, KC5LCF, Houston, TX

Non-ham BMHAers, please send in your call sign as soon as you get your FCC amateur radio license. We'd like to list you in this column. If you have time, tell us how and what you studied, what helped you to pass the test. We'll pass it on to our non-ham members, who are all thinking about taking the exam.

TRAVEL & ADVENTURE

'94 Hamming Tour Along Pacific Crest Bicycle Trail a Success!

Bicycling, hamming, and camping in some of the most beautiful forests in the world came together for the second annual hamming bicycle tour along the Pacific Crest Bicycle Trail in late August. Four hams along with six other riders bicycled from Crescent Lake, Oregon to Week/Mt. Shasta, California, in one week.

Most of the participants hadn't met before the trip and there were a number of firsts this year: The first women bicyclists (two), the first foreign participants (two from Germany), and the first recumbent bike. There were also two strong cyclists in their sixties.



Ready for a week's tour on the Pacific Crest, led by Bil Paul, KD6JUI (front, right), the ten riders pause for a group shot.

The hams were Dan Arbogast (N0DA) of Corvallis, Oregon; Russel Dwarshuis (KB8U) of Ann Arbor, Michigan; Gottfried Kloyer (KL2MFJ/AA1JQ) of Wessling, Germany; and myself (Bil Paul, KD6JUI). With the exception of Kloyer, all of us are members of BMHA. And all except Dwarshuis used solar panels for power.

The most consistent use of ham equipment was to stay in touch with one another. As might be expected, the tour separated into faster and slower groups, and on several occasions groups chose different routes for a day's ride, meeting at the same new campground at the end of the day. A ham with an HT was made part of each group. Communications were usually via simplex on 146.52 MHz. As a result, everyone knew what everyone else was doing, and there was no worry about someone having an accident or mechanical breakdown and being out of touch. There was one exception — when non-ham Jan Maurer got lost!

HF QRP operation along the way was not spectacular, due to being on the low end of the solar cycle, but enough contacts were made to please everyone.

37-year-old student Dan Arbogast used a home-made ground plane to make packet contacts back to his home area in Oregon. He used a Kenwood HT, Kantronics PKS TNC, and an HP calculator (for its display), which together with the antenna weighed about 7 pounds.

33-year-old Russell Dwarshuis (an electrical engineer for the University of Michigan) opened eyes along the way with his ham-fitted Tour-Easy recumbent bicycle, fitted with both a 2-meter Icom HT and an HT-like Tokyo Hypower HT-750 running 2-3 watts on 7, 21, and 50 MHz, and powered by rechargeable NiCads. The HF antenna was a 40 meter Ham Stick. Using a home-brew keyer installed on the Tour-Easy's handlebars, Russell could do CW while in motion. He had contacts on 40 meters in California and Washington State.

32-year-old Gottfried Kloyer from Germany was the most dedicated QRP-er in the group. Besides his HT, Kloyer used a handsome homebrew QRP rig, running 5 watts (with a paddle keyer) into a half-wavelength 40 meter vertical antenna. He was able to work Japan, Alaska, Canada, and Hawaii. Kloyer, who has an electronics job and is studying physics in Germany, was amazed at the amount of forests and open space in the American West.

For this trip my ham gear was mostly new. I was fortunate to borrow a prototype multi-band "Sierra" QRP rig available in kit form for members of the Northern California QRP club. The 2- to 3-watt superhet transceiver weighs only 2 pounds, has very low current requirements, and uses plug-in frequency modules.

My antennas for the trip included a roll-up J-pole antenna for my 2-meter HT (with which I was able to activate a repeater 130 miles away), an inverted-V antenna for 20 and 40 meters, and an end-fed dipole for 20 meters. I had QRP contacts in California, Oregon, Washington, Canada, and Hawaii, primarily on 40 meters. My total ham equipment weighed 10 pounds.

The major problem for the hams on the trip was getting antennas up in trees. Using slingshots, shooting a weight on a line up over a tree branch was easy. The problem was in getting the weight to come down from the branch. Evergreen trees in this part of the country often have sticky parts, thick foliage, and/or moss. The best solution was to find a dead tree with dead branches. I vowed to use a helium balloon next year to avoid the cussing and cursing!

A slight problem was HF interference when two hams were transmitting at the same time. A schedule was worked out so that only one ham was operating at a time.

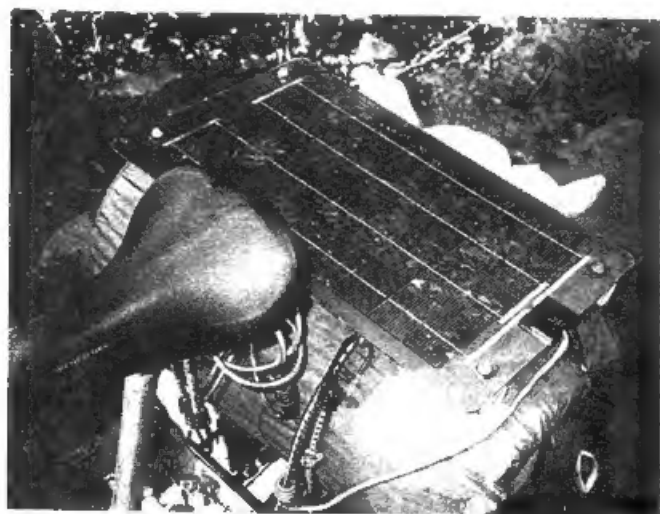
The trip went pretty much just as planned (with perfect weather) and the party of 10 people seemed perfect, so I plan to limit next year's party to the same number.

Hams interested in the '95 trip, May 27 to June 3, from Hamburg, CA to Lake Tahoe, CA should get on the mailing list ASAP by writing to me at 337 Estrella Way, San Mateo, CA 94403-2940.

Notes on Solar Power

Three hams used solar power on this trip. Two of them (Dan Arbogast, N0DA and Bil Paul, KD6JUI) used the same

model, which they highly recommend to other bicycle hams: It's the Solarex MSX10L, which can generate a maximum of about 10 watts (17 volts at 0.57 amps) in full sunlight. The unit measures just over 17" x 10", and has the cells bonded to heavy-duty aluminum. Both hams used charge controllers to prevent the overcharging of sealed lead-acid batteries. Dan further had his bike rigged so that the cell could power his HT directly, without a battery, while riding.



Solar cell setup on Dan's bike.
Bungees firmly hold cell on bed roll.

Both hams attached PVC pipe (with screw-eyes attached to the pipes) to the bottom of the solar cell so that it would sit well on top of a sleeping bag on the rear of their bikes, and could be held down to the bike with bungee cords.

The Solarex solar cells run about \$150 and are available at: Real Goods, 966 Mazzoni St, Ukiah, CA 95482, 1-800 762-7325
Sunlight Energy Systems, 2225 Mayflower NW, Massillon, OH 44647

—Bil Paul, KD6JUI

337 Estrella Way
San Mateo, California 94403

BMHA NET....ON 20

Spring Perfect Time to Check into Net

TIME: 2000 UTC and four hours later at 0000 UTC.

DATE: 1st and 3rd Sunday of each month.

FREQ: 14.253 — plus or minus the QRM.

Look for me, NF0N, at those times, and if I'm unable to call the net please look for those who have picked up the net when I've been out of town. In particular, look for Assistant Net Controls Jim Kortge, NU8N, and John Liebenrood, K7RO. Jim covers the East, John covers the West, and I cover the middle.

See you at our Forum at Dayton! 73....

—Mike Nickolaus, NF0N, BMHA Net Control
316 E. 32nd St.
S. Sioux City, NE 68776

Back Issues Still Available

You may purchase any of the eighteen back issues of the BMHA NewsLetter for \$1.75 each, postpaid. For info on the contents of the various issues send a #10 business-size SASE (self-addressed, stamped envelope) to: BMHA, POB 4009, Boulder CO 80306, and ask for the Index of Back Issues. This service available to members only.

FOR SALE

Mizuho 40-meter SSB/CW handheld transceiver, including whip antenna. Used once. \$250. Mike Bailey, KK6NF, POB 19989, San Diego CA 92159.

Do you have bicycle-mobile-related radio equipment for sale? Send in a description and we'll run it. Limit of 20 words, plus your name, address, phone. For members only.

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The next time you need to order new QSL cards, don't forget to include the BMHA logo in your design. Here's the official logo, as designed by Russ Dwarshuis, KB8U.

BICYCLE MOBILE



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LETTERS

Headphones....Pros and Cons

Editor:

Although I'm not a bicycling safety education expert, I have been bicycling semi-seriously for almost two decades and I've logged thousands of miles on the road. Speaking from that perspective, I can neither agree with or endorse John Allen's suggestion [see page 8, Oct. BMHA Newsletter] that there's nothing wrong with wearing headphones while bicycling.

I found Mr. Allen's letter of great enough concern that I felt that someone more qualified in the field of bicycling safety than me needed to address this issue, so I sent a copy of the newsletter to the League of American Wheelmen and asked for a response. I received a reply from Jerry Hopfengardner, who is a member of the LAW Board of Directors and chairs their Education Committee.

He stated: *"I am neither an engineer specializing in acoustics nor an attorney. I do appreciate John Allen's technical 'Letter' -- In Favor of Headphones. However, from a very practical perspective, conventional wisdom clearly suggests that safe bicycling is dependent upon maximum use of both visual and auditory senses. Wearing anything over one's ears or adding auditory reception could impede a cyclist's ability to discern 'road noise' from that transmitted by the headphones. A 'street smart' cyclist has developed very keen visual and auditory senses -- and, in my opinion, headphones represent a very serious impediment to safe riding (especially in traffic)."*

Reasonable and prudent persons would probably agree in principle with Mr. Hopfengardner and consider it incumbent on bicyclists to always apply full time and attention to what's going on around them. I can see no justification for intentionally limiting perhaps the second most important of our senses to any degree simply to enhance playing with an entertainment device such as an amateur radio transceiver, particularly when doing so could easily have grave consequences.

—Tony Stalls, K4KYO
917 North Lexington Street
Arlington, Virginia 22205

AA6WK Replies:

Editor:

While I appreciate the concerns expressed by Tony, K4KYO, I believe that it is apparent that he is strongly overstating the case against using a radio on a bicycle.

His same argument — unmodified — would equally strongly suggest that closing windows or using the broadcast radio in an automobile would be very dangerous, as well as the distraction offered by travelling a scenic route.

Every driver of a vehicle -- be it a bicycle, an automobile, or a chariot — must drive that vehicle safely. If something is too distracting to that driver, then it must not be done (be it closing the windows, listening to the radio, whistling a happy tune, or operating a transceiver).

To assume that communications-grade audio in one ear (California forbids both ears) is inherently dangerous and prevents hearing "road noise" is false. Most of us listen to voice communication at levels which block no road noise whatsoever.

Although I realize that his intent is unintended, Tony's statement that *amateur transceivers are "entertainment devices"* is condescending and not entirely true. I have personally used my bicycle-mounted "entertainment device" for public service as well as personal communications. I have also (twice) summoned help in life-threatening situations because I, although mounted on a bicycle far from the incident, happened to be the only control operator available on the repeater.

Please ride safely. Many of the "how-to" hints here in the BMHA Newsletter emphasize safe radio placement and safe operating practices such as avoiding one-handed operation of the bicycle. Used properly, a ham transceiver can enhance — not degrade — bicycle safety.

—Skip La Fera, AA6WK
1614 Peacock Ave
Sunnyvale CA 94087
Former Board Member (bicycle safety advocate)
Western Wheelers Bicycle Club

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